

Exercise walk-through

Inference and the writer's attitude ■ 1.4

eXercise

You must be able to

- infer meaning that the text implies but does not state
- identify a writer's attitude from their word choices
- support an inference by quoting the exact words that led to it

Method — Inference is evidence plus reasoning

An inference is not a guess. It is a conclusion the text forces, even though the text does not say it.

She checked the timetable for the fourth time and looked down the empty road.

We can infer she is **anxious** and that the bus is **late**. The text says neither. The evidence is *the fourth time* and *empty road*.

Method — Attitude lives in word choice

Two writers can report the same fact and reveal opposite attitudes.

- *The council has finally agreed to repair the road.* — *finally* implies the writer thinks it took too long.
- *The council has already agreed to repair the road.* — *already* implies the writer thinks it was quick.

Watch for: adverbs (*merely, only, finally, supposedly*), adjectives with a judgement in them (*cramped* rather than *small*), and verbs of doubt (*claims, insists, admits*).

Method — How to write the answer

Always quote. A statement of attitude with no quotation earns half of what it could:
The writer is impatient with the delay. He writes that the work “should have been finished two winters ago”, which shows he thinks the delay is unreasonable, not merely unfortunate.

Practice 2.1 ■ 2 marks

What can you infer about the writer's opinion of the car park and cycle racks? Support your answer with evidence.

Solution 2.1

Method: Inference is evidence plus reasoning

Worked steps

The writer thinks the centre has been designed for drivers rather than for people arriving on foot or by bike (B1). The evidence is the contrast between “three cycle racks” and “a car park for two hundred vehicles”, and the fact that the writer counted them at all (B1).

Practice 2.2 ■ 2 marks

Explain what the writer suggests by putting “under consideration” in quotation marks and adding “which he has said before”.

Solution 2.2

Method: How to write the answer

Worked steps

The quotation marks distance the writer from the manager's phrase, suggesting he does not believe it (B1); "which he has said before" implies the promise is repeated and never acted on (B1).

Practice 2.3 ■ 2 marks

Is the writer's view of the centre entirely negative? Support your answer.

Solution 2.3

Worked steps

No **B1**. He praises the equipment directly — “the equipment is genuinely good”, the pool is what the club asked for, and the coaches were delighted **B1**.

Exam-style 3.1

Which word in the first paragraph most clearly signals the writer's disapproval?

A opened

B promised

C roughly

D deserved

Solution 3.1

Method: Attitude lives in word choice

A opened

B promised

C roughly

D deserved



Worked steps

D. The mayor's word "deserved" is quoted, and the writer immediately undercuts it by counting the cycle racks — the quotation is used to expose the claim rather than to support it. *Accept C with a strong justification about "roughly" implying carelessness with money.*

Exam-style 3.2 ■ 2 marks

Explain the effect of the phrase “four years after it was promised and roughly twice over its original budget” being placed in the very first sentence.

Solution 3.2

Worked steps

It places the delay and the overspend before any of the centre's merits **B1**, so the reader judges everything that follows against that failure — a positive opening would have produced a different impression of the same facts **B1**.

Exam-style 3.3 ■ 3 marks

Choose **one** phrase from the text and explain what it reveals about the writer's attitude.

Solution 3.3

Worked steps

One mark for a correctly chosen phrase, one for an accurate statement of the attitude, one for explaining how the words create it. For example: “a discount scheme is ‘under consideration’” (B1) shows scepticism (B1), because reporting an official phrase in the manager’s own words, rather than as a fact, invites the reader to doubt it (B1).